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WASHINGTON, DC - U.S. Rep. Charlie Melancon today announced that the Lafourche Parish School Board has been selected to receive a grant from the U.S. Department of Education's Improving Literacy Through School Libraries program. The school board will receive \$296,661 for the period of September 2006 through August 2007.

"Solid reading skills are so important for our children to be successful later in life," Melancon said. "As technology advances, we must make sure our local school districts are able to keep up the pace, and this grant will help to achieve that for Lafourche Parish."

The Improving Literacy Through School Libraries program helps local education agencies improve reading achievements by providing students with increased access to up-to-date school library materials, well-equipped technologically advanced school library media centers, and professional certified school library media specialists.

The grant will go toward Lafourche Parish's "Expanding Paths to Literacy" project, which will help increase the reading achievement and literacy skills of 7,152 students in 17 elementary schools. The Parish will use this grant to expand their collection of non-fiction books and resources at the school library media centers, acquire up-to-date technology, provide professional development to library media specialists on elementary literacy strategies that support reading and writing instruction, and extend library hours for summer library use at six elementary schools.

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